SPECIAL FEATURE
WAYNE HYDE

APRIL 19, 1978

WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL IN KANSAS CITY
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: THE "WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL" -- THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE UNITED STATES -- WAS HELD DURING THE WEEKEND OF MARCH 17 THROUGH 19 IN THE MIDWESTERN CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI. WITH A REPORT ON THE THREE-DAY EVENT, HERE IS----------.

VOICE: JAZZ CRITIC WHITNEY BALLIETT OF THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE RECENTLY WROTE THESE WORDS: "JAZZ IS A PECULIARLY MALE MUSIC FOR WHICH WOMEN LACK THE PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT, TO SAY NOTHING OF THE POISE."

HAH! MISTER BALLIETT SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN KANSAS CITY THAT WEEKEND A MONTH AGO. HE WOULD HAVE HEARD MANY OUTSTANDING WOMEN JAZZ ARTISTS PERFORMING EVERY BIT AS WELL AS ANY MALE JAZZ MUSICIAN EVER DID. ON THE FINAL EVENING -- SUNDAY, MARCH 19 -- THE CONCERT WAS SCHEDULED TO END AT 11 P.M. BUT THERE WERE MORE THAN FIVE HOURS OF EXCITING MUSIC -- SEVERAL ENCORES CONTRIBUTING TO THE OVERTIME -- AND WHEN THE LIGHTS FINALLY CAME UP IN MEMORIAL HALL LONG AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE AUDIENCE STILL HAD NOT HAD ENOUGH.

THE ENTIRE THREE-DAY PROGRAM WAS PRODUCED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL, INCORPORATED, A MISSOURI-CHARTED CORPORATION, NON-PROFIT AND NON-POLITICAL, COMMITTED TO CREATING A MARKET FOR THE INCREASING NUMBER OF FEMALES IN THE FIELD OF JAZZ. IT'S PRESIDENT IS DIANNE GREGG, A KANSAS CITY RADIO PERSONALITY WHO BROADCASTS A POPULAR JAZZ PROGRAM. AFTER THE FESTIVAL CONCLUDED, SHE WAS ASKED HOW SHE FELT ABOUT IT.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- GREGG

"OH, I THINK IT WAS GREAT. I REALLY DO. IT'S THE FIRST TIME IT'S EVER BEEN DONE. WE DID MAKE HISTORY BECAUSE, AS WE FOUND OUT LATER, NO ONE HAS EVER DONE THAT BEFORE -- HAD A WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL. THERE'VE BEEN WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVALS ON A SMALL SCALE, BUT NOT LIKE THIS -- NOT ON SUCH A SCALE AS WE HAD. I'VE NEVER SEEN AN AUDIENCE THAT WAS MORE APPRECIATIVE THAN THE ONE THAT WAS AT THE CONCERT SUNDAY NIGHT. EVERY (JAZZ) GROUP -- AND WE HAD FIVE -- EVERY GROUP GOT A STANDING OVATION."

VOICE: IT WAS NOT A WOMEN-ONLY PERFORMANCE. THERE WERE MANY MALE MUSICIANS TAKING PART, BUT WOMEN WERE THE STAR PERFORMERS; THE MALE MUSICIANS WERE "SIDEMEN" -- BACKING UP THE FEMALE STARS.

AMONG THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMERS WERE SINGERS BETTY CARTER AND MARILYN MAYE, WHO BOTH GAVE DAZZLING VOCAL DISPLAYS. THERE WERE THE WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL ALL-STARS, SIX WOMEN WHOSE STRAIGHTFORWARD, SOLID-TEMPO BRAND OF JAZZ EQUALED ANYTHING ANY SIX GOOD MALE MUSICIANS COULD HAVE DONE. AMONG THEM, MARY OSBORNE, THE JAZZ GUITARIST WHO HAS LED HER OWN SUCCESSFUL GROUP FOR TWENTY YEARS; AND YOUNG MARY PARK, THE ONLY GIRL EVER TO PLAY AS A REGULAR SAXOPHONIST WITH THE FAMOUS STAN KENTON ORCHESTRA. JAZZ PIANISTS MARY LOU WILLIAMS AND MARIAN MCPARTLAND WERE THERE. BETWEEN THEM, THEY HAVE ABOUT EIGHTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL JAZZ EXPERIENCE. AND, AS A SAMPLE OF THE KIND OF MUSIC THE AUDIENCE WAS TREATED TO, HERE IS THE MARIAN MCPARTLAND TRIO WITH AN OLD JAZZ FAVORITE, "STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY".

TAPE: CUT TWO -- "SAVOY" -- USE AS NEEDED -- TOTAL CUT: 4:05

VOICE: NOT ALL THE PERFORMERS WERE PROFESSIONALS. MANY WERE MUSIC STUDENTS. THEY CAME FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES JUST

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TAPE: CUT FOUR -- "CHILDREN IN THE TEMPLE GROUND" -- TOTAL TIME: 4:30-USE AS NEEDED

VOICE: AND SO THE FIRST WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL IS HISTORY. THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ONE -- ALSO IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI -- NEXT YEAR. MEANWHILE THE FESTIVAL ORGANIZATION IS NOW AWAITING A TEN-THOUSAND-DOLLAR GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS. IF THEY GET IT, IT WILL HELP TAKE CARE OF SOME OF THE EXPENSES FOR NEXT YEAR'S FESTIVAL.

OPT AND IF MUSIC CRITIC WHITNEY BALLIETT -- WHO WROTE ABOUT WOMEN NOT BEING ABLE TO PLAY JAZZ -- ATTENDS NEXT YEAR'S FESTIVAL, HE MAY CHANGE HIS OPINIONS ABOUT WOMEN JAZZ ARTISTS. /

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